Remarks

Claims 1-3, 5-49, and 51-67 are currently pending. Claims 1, 17, 30, 35, 36, 43, 47, and 54 have been amended. Applicants assert that all claims are now in condition for allowance as set forth more fully below.

Interview Summary

The undersigned participated in an interview with the Examiner on December 8, 2004. During the interview, deficiencies in the Chen reference were discussed relative to subject matter of the present invention. Namely, it was discussed how the Chen reference requires that a separate switch module be present at the user premises and that the separate switch module is what provides an on-hook signal once an intercom call has been placed. It was further discussed that the switch module of Chen rings only one of the telephones attached when establishing the intercom call, as opposed to allowing all of the phones connected to the single telephone line ring.

103 Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-49, and 51-67 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations Kay (US Pat 5,247,571) in view of Chen (US Pat 5,930,346) together with other references including Fleisher (US Pat 5,794,133) and Regnier (US Pat 6,345,047). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Each of the claims now includes recitations to a remote network receiving an on-hook signal from a first telephone of a location when the intercom call is being established. As a representative example, amended claim 1 recites, in part, receiving at a remote network an intercom service request from a first telephone at the location, the intercom service request including the calling number associated with the location, receiving an on-hook signal at the remote network from the first telephone at the calling location, and directing initiation of an intercom call from the remote network to the location.

The cited combination of references fails to disclose a remote network that receives the on-hook signal from the first phone at the location where the intercom service request is coming from.

The Office Action cites to Chen to state than an on-hook signal is received. However, Chen requires that the location where the intercom is to be established have a switch module to which all phones are connected, and the switch module is then connected to the single telephone line 116 leading to the remote central office. When the user selects the intercom option, it is the switch module that utilizes a relay to then present the on-hook signal to the central office. The telephone that the user has selected the intercom service from is not on-hook. Once the central office rings back to the desired party who then answers, the relay of the switch module then goes back off-hook to re-connect the telephone that the user is using. Thus, Chen fails to account for the deficiencies in Kay relating to the first telephone providing the on-hook signal.

Furthermore, Chen is inoperable in intercom mode without the switch module being present to provide the on-hook and off-hook signals rather than the telephone itself. There is no disclosure in Chen that the user may use the phone to signal the on-hook and then know when to later place the phone off-hook. In Chen, the switch module sends the ringing signal to the desired party and not the calling party to the intercom, so there is no signal alerting the calling party of the intercom ring back. So if the telephone of the calling party was placed on-hook, in addition to the switch module placing it on hook, then the calling party would not be aware of when and if the ring back was answered by the called party. Thus, there is no suggestion in Chen for modification by causing the telephone to provide the on-hook signal in place of the switch module.

Regnier discloses that for an intercom call, the code is dialed, the name of the party to be contacted is spoken, and then the caller hangs up the phone prior to the distinctive ring occurring for the called party. However, Regnier discloses that the phone is connected to a local hub that provides the intercom service, as opposed to provisioning the intercom service from a remote network such as a PSTN. Thus, any on-hook signal provided from Regnier is provided to the hub and not to a remote network. Thus, Regnier fails to account for the deficiencies in Kay and Chen. Furthermore, Regnier is limited to the local hub implementation whereby the intercom service is completely isolated from the POTS line to the PSTN by the hub and does not suggest that such intercom features could be moved out to the PSTN or other remote network.

Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable over the cited references for at least these reasons. Claims 17, 30, 36, 43, 47 and 54 include similar recitations and are also allowable for at least the same reasons. Dependent claims 2, 3, 5-16, 18-29, 31-35, 37-42, 44-46, 48, 49, 51-53, and 55-67 depend from allowable base claims and are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

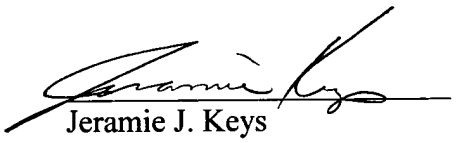
Conclusion

Applicants assert that the application including claims 1-3, 5-49, and 51-67 is now in condition for allowance. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the amendments and remarks above and further request that a Notice of Allowability be provided. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

No fees are believed due. However, please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3025.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 13, 2004



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